



# *Human Relations Commission*

April 15, 2009 – 6:00 p.m. – **Minutes**  
City Hall – Ashley Room – First Floor

View Agenda

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**Present:** Janice Baptist, Chairperson  
William do Carmo, Member  
Dr. Ferdinand Fuentes, Member  
Estella Ribeiro, Member  
Latisha Silva, Member  
Carol F. Walsh, Secretary  
Reverend Richard D. Wilson, Member  
**Also Present:** Marcelina Pina-Christian, Human Services Coordinator  
Amber Holland

Chairperson Baptist called the meeting to order at 6:05 P.M.

Chairperson Baptist introduced Ms. Amber Holland, a student at Bristol Community College, who will be doing ten hours of Community Service Learning working with HRC. Ms. Pina-Christian suggested that perhaps Ms. Holland could work on the Human Relations Commission brochure.

## **Acceptance of Minutes of Meetings:**

**MOTION** by Mr. do Carmo to accept the Minutes of the April 2009 meeting – **SECONDED:** Ms. Ribeiro – **UNANIMOUS** – **MOTION CARRIES.**

## **Human Services Coordinator Report – Marcelina Pina-Christian**

### **Complaint Status Report:**

Complaint regarding neighbor conflict / harassment / hate crime in New Bedford: It was reported in the HRC Minutes for February 2009, that after first having refused to participate in mediation with the Department of Justice, both parties agreed to participate. Mediation has been completed with the DOJ. Both parties have still to sign the agreement, which will then bring final closure to this issue. Information has been received that one of the neighbors might be moving.

Complaint regarding New Bedford Registry of Motor Vehicles: Background: Complainant, who previously received driving permit from RMV using headphones with audio instructions in Spanish, was unable to take the road test within specified time period. When RMV informed him that he would have to take test again but would not be allowed to retake using previous procedure, and the test would be in English, Complainant sought help from this Commission. Chairperson Baptist stated that in order to resolve this Complaint, further discussion with Complainant is required. A letter will be sent to Complainant informing him of this. Ms. Pina-Christian will prepare the letter, and translation will be provided by any one of the several Commissioners who are fluent in Spanish.

Discussion ensued regarding the protocol to be followed by HRC in the resolution of Complaints that are brought to this Commission. Protocol should include the general guidelines involving the investigation, documentation, and the report process. Dr. Fuentes informed Commissioners that MCAD offers training in this area. He also stated that there is mediation training available. Dr. Fuentes will provide this Commission with a sample protocol document form.

- Report on The State Of The Civil Rights Town Hall Meeting: The meeting was well attended – According to Ron Marlowe, Assistant Secretary of Access and Opportunity, it was the largest audience of all the town hall meetings held in Massachusetts – Malcolm Medley, Chairman of Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination, requested that HRC and MCAD keep the communication lines open.
- MA HRC: We received a flyer regarding the film “Detained” which many other Human Relations Commissions have shown – Mayor Lang is the moderator and Everett Hoagland is the poet.
- City of New Bedford Planning Department: Public informational meetings are now being held regarding the City’s Master Plan
- NAACP Freedom Fund Breakfast will be held in June.
- Announcement: Program Subcommittee needs another member. Ms. Walsh will serve on this committee.

**New Business:**

The recent resignation of Beth Sylvia created a vacancy in the position of Vice Chairperson of the Human Relations Commission. Commissioners agreed that this position must be filled.

**MOTION** by Dr. Fuentes to nominate Ms. Silva as Vice Chairperson of the Human Relations Commission – **SECONDED**: Ms. Walsh – **UNANIMOUS** – **MOTION CARRIES**. Ms. Silva accepted the position.

Discussion commenced regarding Commissioner, Franklin Eccleston, who has experienced changes in his work situation at the New Bedford Police Department. Because these changes might affect his attendance at HRC meetings, it was suggested that Chairperson Baptist contact Sgt. Eccleston to discuss the situation.

Dr. Fuentes spoke about Governor Patrick’s Initiative on Immigration. He stated that HRC Commissioners should study the document, as it contains policy recommendations on education from Kindergarten through Adult Education, and that this is important to New Bedford’s population.

During discussion of the City of New Bedford 2020 Master Plan, several Commissioners expressed their concern that the focus groups were not truly representative of the diverse population of our city. Commissioners agreed that members of the focus groups should be representative of all groups in our city, and that there must not be racial disparity. Chairperson Baptist stated that she will call Jill McLean to ask how the groups are selected and if members of these groups truly represent the city regarding the aspects of color, demographics, generational, social, economical, geographical, and gender. Reverend Wilson recommended sending a letter to Mayor Lang regarding these concerns. Mr. do Carmo mentioned that it is important for youth to be included in the Master Plan because all too often they feel disenfranchised

**MOTION** by Reverend Wilson to send a letter to Mayor Lang and Jill McLean regarding the City of New Bedford 2020 Master Plan stating that the focus groups must be more inclusive and that the Human Relations Commission can help to do this – **CODICIL**: all groups previously mentioned will be referenced in this letter – **SECONDED**: Dr. Fuentes - **UNANIMOUS** – **MOTION CARRIES** – No Abstentions.

The meeting was adjourned at 7 p.m.

Next scheduled meeting: May 20, 2009

A true record attest: \_\_\_\_\_